Illegal iron-ore mining

2796. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Karnataka, which has the second largest proven deposits of iron ore (3.5 billion tonnes) in the country, is losing crores of rupees, with illegal mining reaching an all time high;

(b) whether it is a fact that loss from illegal mining to the State exchequer is estimated to be around Rs. 3000 crore in the last two years; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to curtail the-illegal mining in Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) to (c) some instances of illegal mining have came to the notice of the Government. State Governments are the owners of minerals and grant mining lease. Since the mineral rights and collection of revenue vests with the State Government, and police and law and order machinery is with the respective States, full powers to curb illegal mining have beerrdelegated to the State Government as per the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957. The State Government has set up a Commission of Enquiry, which will also assess the quantum of losses to the Government due to illegal mining. The Central Government has also directed State Governments to frame rules under section 23C of MMDR Act, constitute task forces at State/District level for preventing of illegal mining and furnish quarterly return on illegal mining for review by Ministry of Mines. During the year 2005-06 State Government of Karnataka has realized total fine Rs. 191.4 lakhs and for 2006-07 (till June, 2006) Rs. 41 lakhs for royalty, cess, taxes and penalty.

Categorisation of chalk as minor mineral

2797. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal sent by the State Government of Gujarat to consider chalk as minor mineral instead of major mineral was under consideration of the Central Government;

(b) if so, the whether final decision has been taken in the matter;

(c) whether Government are going to remore the impediments like labour to tap the opportunity emerging out of the quota free regime,

(d) whether Government are going to consider the proposal of the Gujarat Government for application of labour reforms to labour intensive industrial park; and

(e) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid down on the Table of the House.

Mineral deposits in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh

2798. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN FANY Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the States like Orissa and Madhya Pradesh are having rich mineral deposits;

(b) if so, whether Government have carried out any survey regarding such deposits;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the stand of Government on excavation of mineral deposits of these States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Geological Survey of India (GSI) and Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL), under the administrative control of this Ministry have been carrying out mineral exploration in these States. GSI and MECL have carried out exploration for coal, copper, diamond, limestone and manganese in both the States. In addition, bauxite, chromite, iron, nickel, platinum group of elements (PGE) were explored in Orissa and gold, lead, zinc, phosphorite in Madhya Pradesh.

(d) As per the National Mineral Policy, 1993 (NMP) the exploitation of these minerals has been thrown open to private entrepreneures.